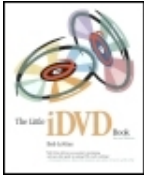
 Add to Project



[Little iDVD Book, Second Edition, The](#)
By Bob LeVitus

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Part 2. A Little Bit Beyond the Basics

Chapter 6. Working with Menus and Buttons

Now that your videos and slideshows are where you want them, it's time to dress up your project. Take control of the theme, choosing backdrops for menus and shapes for buttons, to let you create the look you want for your movies and slideshows.

With iDVD 3 you have a great deal of control over how your DVD looks, and not just which items appear on which menu. You can choose from among the 14 old themes and 24 new themes Apple includes with iDVD (a grand total of 38 delicious themes, for those of you who keep track of such things), such as a background of floating clouds or a still image of parchment paper. Or you can create a custom backdrop from one of your own movies or still images. Maybe you want a dinosaur backdrop for Uncle Yogi's 50th birthday video (all in good-natured fun, of course) or a video of your child's first wobbly steps playing in the background of an entire menu (be careful not to go overboard with motion menus, though—you don't want to make your viewers queasy). Simply start with one of iDVD's built-in themes and modify it.

Take Control of Menus

There's nothing wrong with going the easy route and using one of the themes Apple supplies with iDVD. They're designed by professionals, so you can't go wrong using any of them.

Then again, why not have a little fun? Go on—experiment with different designs, even if you're design-shy. You can always go back to one of the supplied themes if you don't like what you end up with. Chances are you'll come up with something great that reflects your personality.

Let's start with menus.

Pick a starting point

Open the project you started in [Chapter 5](#), if it's not already on-screen, and prepare to modify it. Scroll through iDVD's gallery of themes (see [Figure 6.1](#)) until you find a theme that has elements you'd like to keep, such as an attractive button shape or a nice title font. Even if you don't want to use every element in the theme, there might be parts you'll want to keep and you're that much further ahead in designing the look of your DVD.

Figure 6.1. If you want to use one of Apple's themes as a starting point or even as your finished look, you have these 38 themes to choose from.



If you think you're having a déjà vu, you're right. Figure 6.1 is the same picture as Figure 3.5. What can I say? It fit perfectly and I hate to waste electrons.



It's important to choose a theme you can work with before you make any modifications. If you start customizing parts and then decide you want to try a different theme, all your changes will be wiped out and you'll have to start from scratch.

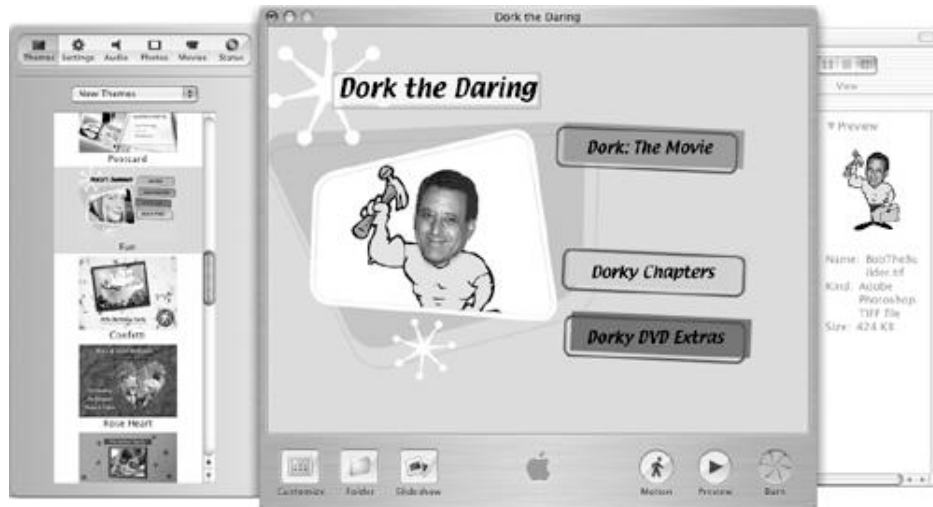
The themes with the little running person in a circle in their lower-right corner are themes that feature motion menus.

The themes without the running dude offer only static menu titles.

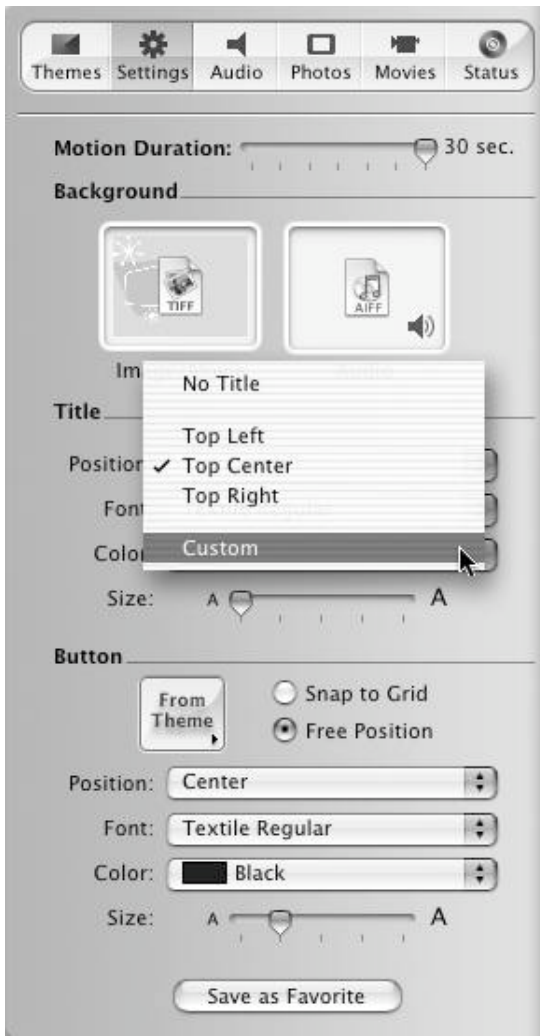
Change the menu title

Next let's change something that's been bugging me since we started this project—the generic title, for example the Sky or Parchment, that comes with each of Apple's themes. Click on the title to highlight it and then type the real title for your project (see [Figure 6.2](#)). If you want to change the font, open the Customize drawer and click the Settings button to switch to the Settings pane. Now choose a font from the Font pop-up menu in the Title area of this pane.

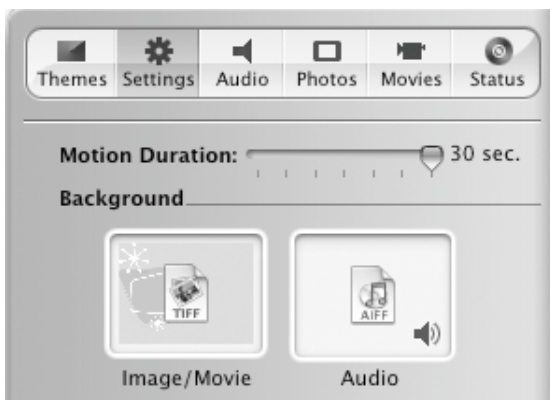
Figure 6.2. I changed the title of my DVD project from "Fun" to "Dork the Daring," since my project documents dorky behavior.



You can move the title wherever you want on the menu if you choose Custom from the Position pop-up menu to unlock its position. Then you can drag the title around with your cursor. If you prefer not to have a title, choose No Title from the Position pop-up menu.



Customize the background image

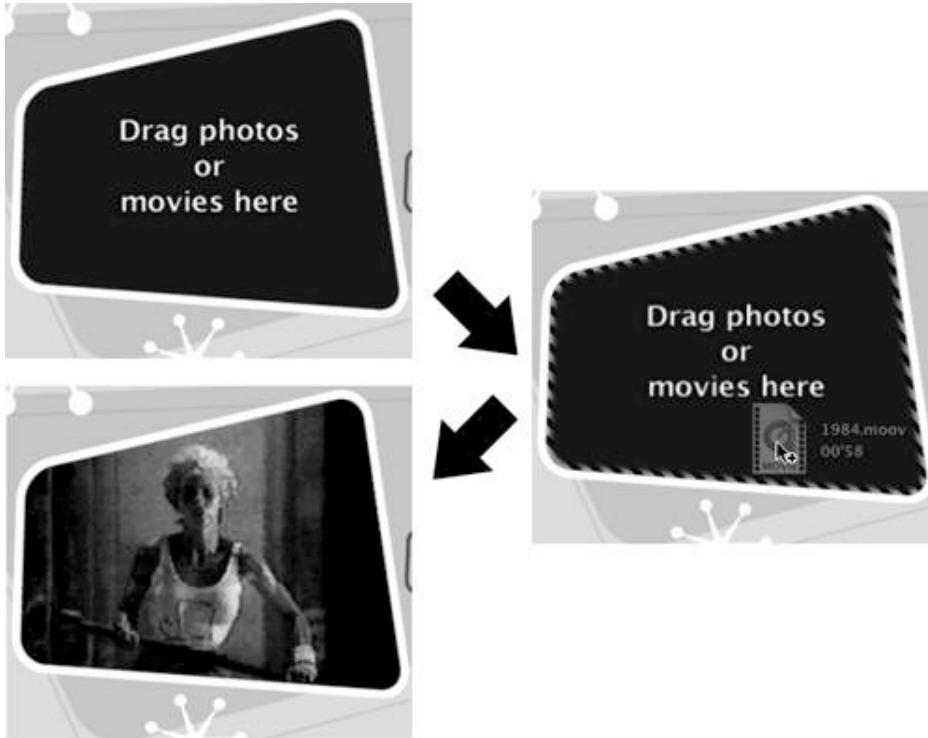


Now let's get the changed image into the background. Find the custom image you want for the opening menu's backdrop. Drag that image's file from your desktop (or your project folder, if you've organized your assets in the folder) onto the main DVD menu screen or into the Image/Movie well in the Background area of the Settings pane.

You can also replace the image by selecting Import > Image from the File menu.



Some of the new themes offer Drop Zones, which is a fancy way to say, "a mask over your background picture or movie." If you see a theme with an area that says "Drag photos or movies here," that's a Drop Zone. You can drag an image or movie onto the Drop Zone and it will highlight.



If you prefer importing via menu, Control-click within the Drop Zone and choose Import... from the contextual menu.

Whatever you put into the Drop Zone—be it picture or movie—will be partially obscured by the mask.

This is one of those occasions where a picture is worth a page full of words, so have an eyeful of [Figure 6.3](#).

Figure 6.3. Items in a Drop Zone are masked by the background image, kind of like this.



If you want to use a video for the background, drag the video file into the Image/Movie well or select Import > Background Video from the File menu.



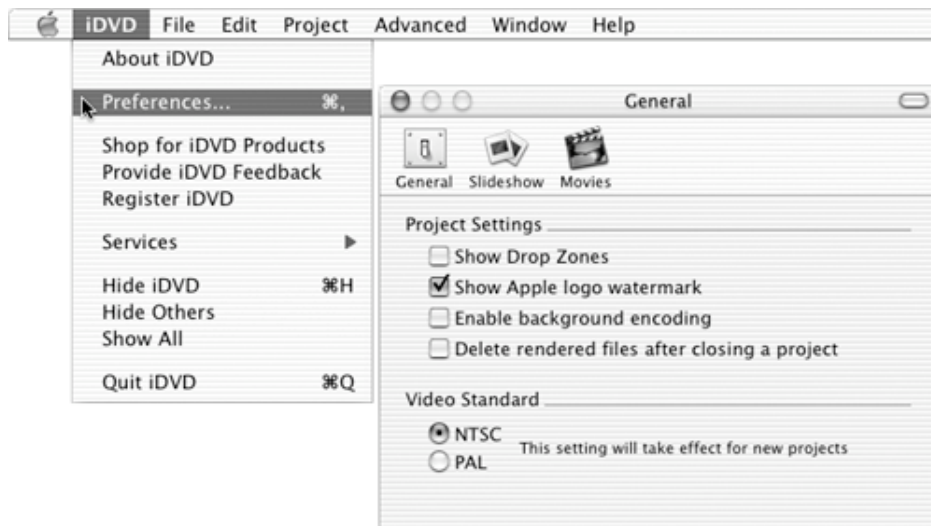
The video file will replace the beautiful image/movie provided by the theme. Furthermore, if the theme has a Drop Zone, doing either of the above will replace the beautiful image/movie and remove the Drop Zone at the same time.

If you drag the file onto the main DVD screen (menu), you'll add another button to the on-screen menu and that's not what you want. Don't forget about the lovely undersea video that comes with Apple's tutorial. If you want to use that for your background, go get it from the Media folder inside the Tutorial folder.

Maybe the image or movie you've chosen doesn't look as good as you thought it would. It's easy to get rid of it. You can import a new image or movie and it will automatically replace your current background. Or you can drag the icon out of the Image/Movie well. Either method will get rid of the current background movie or image. To get rid of an image or movie in a Drop Zone, click on it and drag it out of the iDVD window—the image or movie will disappear in a puff of smoke.



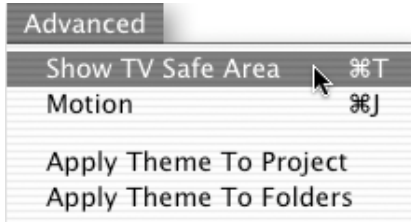
Again, if you prefer menus, Control-click within the Drop Zone and choose Clear from the contextual menu to get rid of the image or movie in the Drop Zone. You won't see the cute animated puff of smoke, however.



There's just one other bit of cleanup we need to do before we move on to having fun with buttons. You might want to expunge that Apple logo watermark that's so visible in the lower-right corner of your DVD menu. Although iDVD 1 didn't have the option of getting rid of the logo, you can with version 3 (as you could with version 2). Simply select Preferences from the iDVD menu and uncheck Show Apple logo watermark.

Have Your Way with Buttons

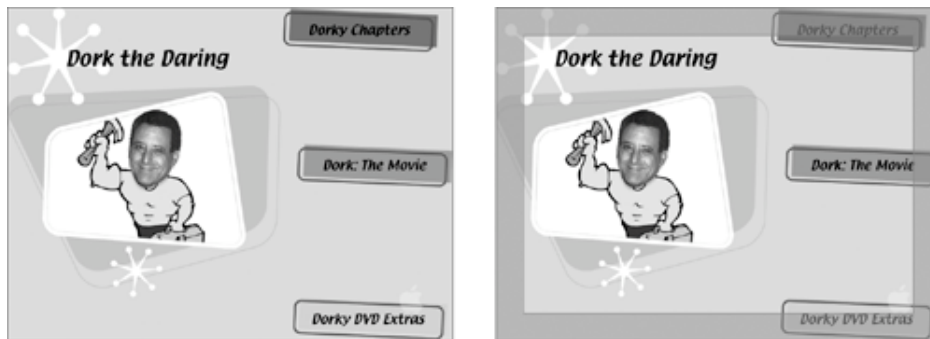
You have even more flexibility designing your buttons than you do with your menus. You can move them, pick new shapes, and use still or moving images for the actual button. And there's one extra trick: You can choose one frame from a movie as the button image. But I digress—we'll get to that one in a minute.



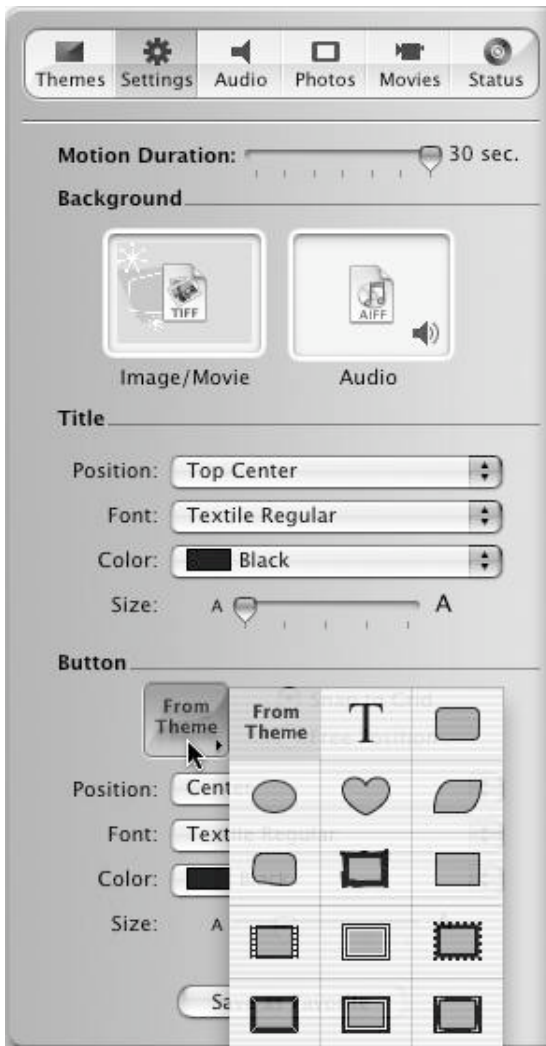
First, the basics. To move buttons, first you must free them from their locked position—choose Free Position from the Settings pane of the Customize drawer. Then drag them as you please. To make sure the buttons (and the title, for that matter) don't drop off the edge of the screen for viewers watching your DVD on a television, select Show TV Safe Area from the Advanced menu or use the keyboard shortcut Command-T.

iDVD helps you out by drawing a box on your menu screen to show you where to confine your elements, as shown in [Figure 6.4](#).

Figure 6.4. This menu screen (left) looks OK, but notice that the **Dorky Chapters** and **Dorky DVD Extras** buttons are almost entirely outside the TV Safe Area. Those buttons won't be visible when this DVD is viewed on a TV.



I know what you're thinking... why bother with a TV safe area? When would you possibly want to position elements where they can't be seen? The answer, my friends, is that QuickTime has no such limitation. So when you create movies specifically for playback on a computer, items outside the TV safe area can still be seen.



To change the shape of buttons, choose from among the shapes in the shape pop-up menu in the Button pane of the Customize drawer.

The shapes are self-explanatory—clicking one makes the buttons on the current screen menu that shape. Choosing the letter "T" makes text buttons with no shape or image attached. Finally, if you hate what you've done, choose From Theme to go back to the button shape the theme's designer specified.

For heaven's sake, change the titles of your buttons to something more meaningful than Slideshow or the file name of your movies—click the button title and type.



You usually need to click twice to edit a button title—once to activate title and a second time to make the text editable. If you click too quickly the second time, you'll activate the button instead of making its title editable. The trick is to click the button title, pause long enough to distinguish it from a double-click, then click a second time.

You can also move the button titles to sit under, above, on the side, or on top of their buttons by choosing the position you want from the Position pop-up menu in the Button pane of the Customize drawer. You can also change the font if you like, but beware of the same problem that plagued desktop publishing. Having different fonts for buttons and menu titles could clash.

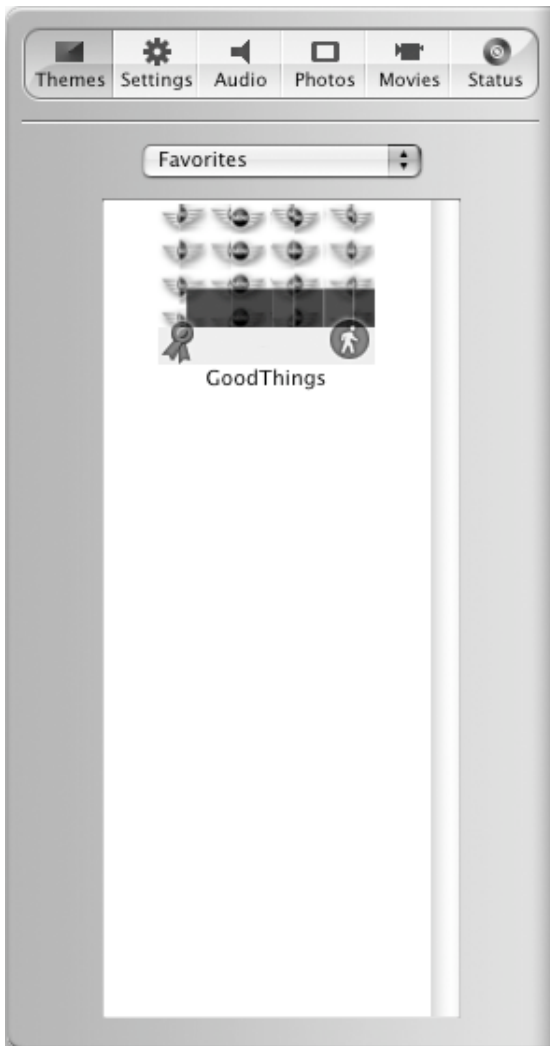
One more option with fonts is to increase or decrease their size using the Size slider in the Button area.

If you've come up with an overall design you might want to use again, save it as a Favorite (click the Save as Favorites button at the bottom of the Customize drawer). When you do, iDVD adds it to the theme choices.



To share your fantastic new theme with everyone who uses your computer, click the "Shared for all users" checkbox when you name your new favorite.

Select Favorites in the Themes pane's pop-up menu to find a favorite quickly.



It's not quite as easy to remove a favorite from the Themes pane. You can't remove it from within iDVD. Instead, you have to quit iDVD, locate the Favorites folder in the Finder (in your Home folder under Library/iDVD/Favorites). Drag the favorite you want to delete to the Trash. One proviso: If you checked the "Shared for all users" checkbox you'll find the favorite in the Library folder at the root level of your hard disk under iDVD/Favorites. (See [Figure 6.5](#).)

Figure 6.5. The only hard part about getting rid of a favorite theme is finding it: Your own themes are in your Home folder Library, but shared themes are in the root-level Library.



Probably the most fun about fiddling with buttons is deciding what image to use. As I said, you have even more options than with the background for menus.

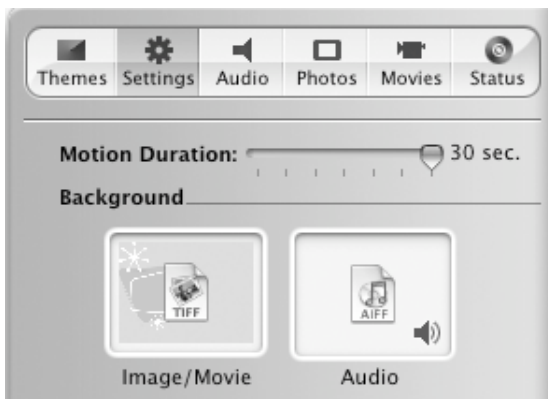
The simplest option is to use a still image. Just drag an image file to the button on the iDVD menu. For slideshow buttons, you can also choose any of the slides in the show as the button image. Click on the button to select it and then move the slider above the button until you find the image you want.

You can apply a moving image by dragging a movie file on top of a button. Another cool trick is to use one of the frames of your movie as the image for a button. Just drag a movie file onto the button and click the button to highlight it and make a slider appear above it. Uncheck the Movie option above the slider, then move the slider until you find the frame you want, as shown in [Figure 6.6](#). Click anywhere on the menu to get rid of the slider. This technique only works for movie buttons, not slideshow buttons.

Figure 6.6. Using frames from your movies increases your options for custom button images; choose a frame by moving the slider above the movie button.



To add a little variety, you can also change the duration of a movie that's playing on a motion button. One way is to move the Motion Duration slider in the Settings pane. But moving the duration will affect the length of clips playing on the menu as well.



So, here's a different technique to try instead: Play just a few frames of a video on a movie button over and over by selecting the button and dragging the slider almost all the way to the right (but not all the way to the right, which will cause the last frame of the movie to appear as a still frame on the button instead of the very short movie you desire). Make sure the Movie option is checked. Turn on Motion (click the button or use the shortcut Command-J) and you'll see a very short clip that plays over and over quickly on this button. Depending on your footage it might look like a short slideshow that toggles between one or two images.

If you need to remove a button, just click it and press Delete on the keyboard. Buttons can also be copied, pasted, and deleted the same way you copy, paste, and delete text in a word processor.

Chapters: They're Not Just For Books Anymore...

Big studio movie DVDs have nifty chapter menus, which allow you to go right to the scene you want. Alas, until recently if you create such a thing on a Mac, you needed much more expensive software than the dynamic duo of iMovie and iDVD. Fortunately, not only do iDVD 3 and iMovie 3 let you create chapters in DVD movies, they make it almost completely automatic.

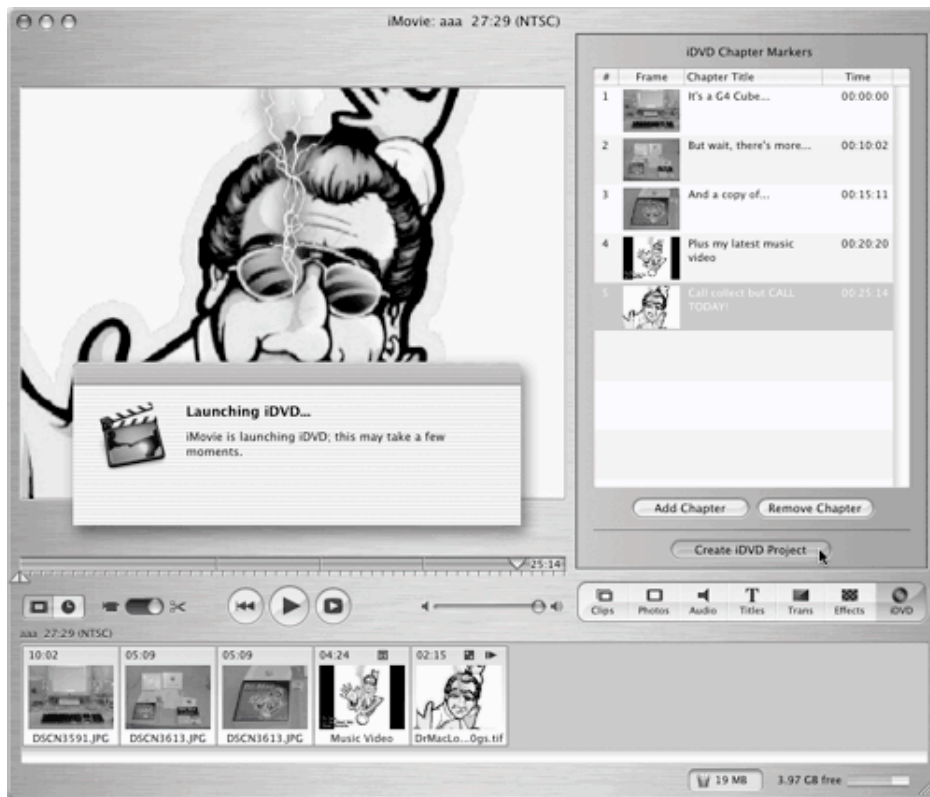


If you're wondering why I'm covering chapters here, well they're really nothing more than buttons on menus... which is exactly what this chapter is about. Onward.

OK. You're going to laugh when you see how drop-dead simple it is to add a scene selection menu with chapter buttons to your iDVD project.

Start with any iMovie project. Click the iDVD button so the iDVD Chapter Markers pane is displayed on the right, as shown in [Figure 6.7](#).

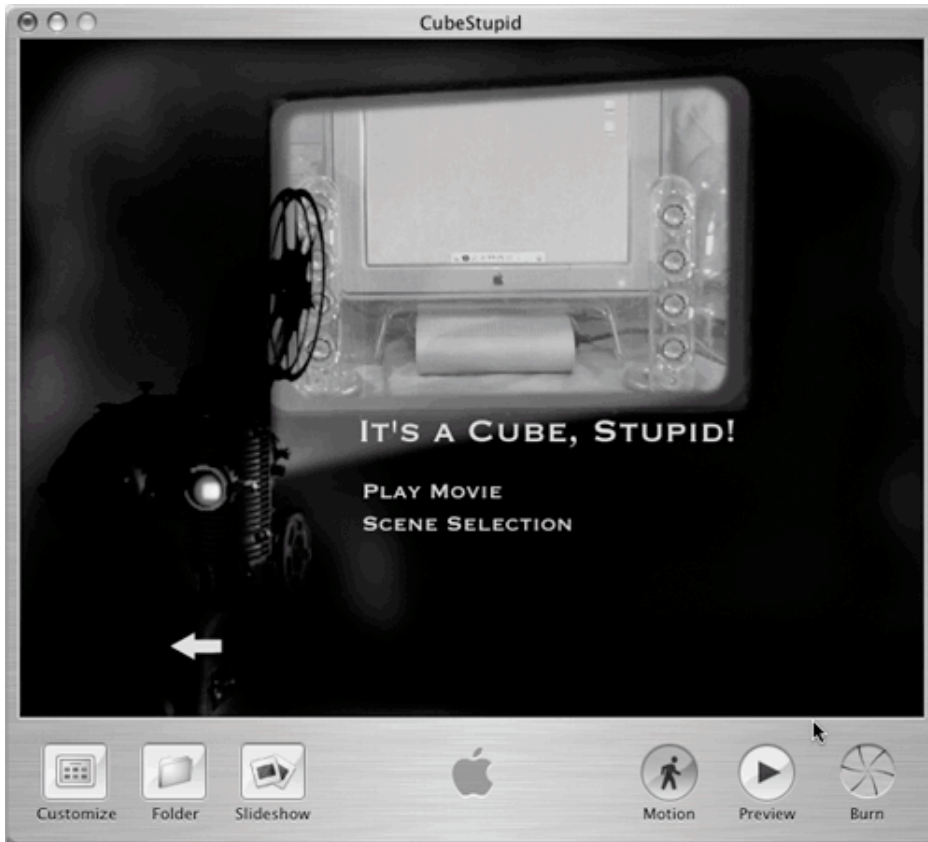
Figure 6.7. This is about all it takes to have scene selection in your DVD.



Now, to add a chapter marker, drag the playhead to where you want the chapter to start, and click the Add Chapter button. Repeat this process until you've included as many chapters as you want and then click the Create iDVD Project button.

A window appears informing you that iDVD is being launched (unless it's already running, in which case you won't see this little window), and in a few moments you have a new project with two pre-made menus.

The first has two buttons:



The second (and subsequent menus if your movie has more than six chapters; as you recall, you can only have six buttons on any menu in iDVD) is the actual scene selection menu, with the chapters you created in iMovie:



You don't even have to use iMovie. If you've created chapter markers in your iMovie project and saved it, you can import the final QuickTime movie from within iDVD and the chapter markers you created in iMovie will be recognized in iDVD. Sweet!

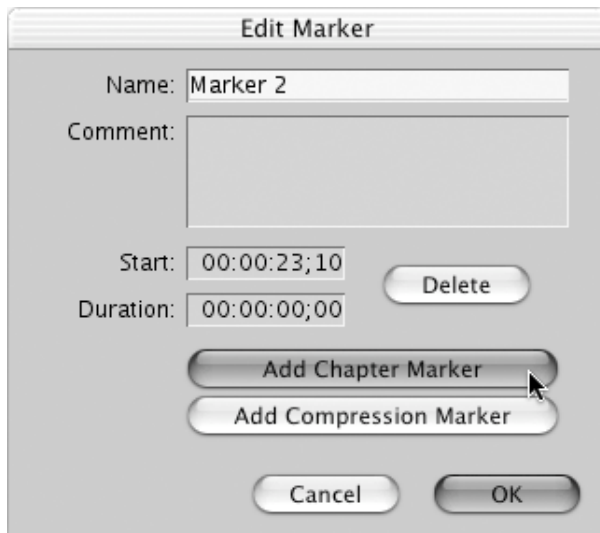


You can change the way iDVD handles movies with chapters in iDVD Preferences' Movies pane.



And if you use Final Cut Pro (FCP) or Final Cut Express (FCE), you can easily participate in the chapter menu extravaganza by creating chapter markers in your FCP or FCE project. It's just as easy as in iMovie, but not nearly as easy to figure out. Here's what to do:

Drag the playhead to where you want the chapter to start, then press the M key twice (once to mark the spot, then again to bring up the Edit Marker dialog). Click the Add Chapter Marker and you're finished. When you import the movie to iDVD, your chapter markers are imported as well.



That's really all there is to creating a scene selection menu. As you can see, you can change the way any button or menu looks, and the scene selection menu and its buttons are... all together now... nothing more than menus and buttons.

Now step back and have a look at your entire project. The only thing missing are sound clips, but you can examine the look of your project by clicking the Preview button. Be sure to turn on motion with the Motion button before you do. If you're satisfied with what you see, it's time to move on to the next step: adding sound to slideshows and menus.